

Application Serial No. 10/538,714
Reply to Office Action of November 29, 2007

PATENT
Docket: CU-4246

REMARKS

In the Office Action, dated November 29, 2007, the Examiner states that Claims 1-11 are pending, and Claims 1-11 are rejected. By the present Amendment, Applicant amends the claims.

In the Office Action, Claims 1, 2, and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C §102(b) as being anticipated by Hiroyuki et al. (JP 2002 - 270470). Claims 3-6 and 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hiroyuki in view of Yoshinaga (JP 08141466). The Applicant considers that the amendments to the claims overcome the rejections.

By this amendment all the claims have been cancelled except for independent Claim 4 and dependent Claim 8. New Claim 12 has been added. The amendment to Claim 4 is supported in the application on page 23, lines 1-26. Support for Claim 12 may be found on page 24, lines 12-16 of the application. No new matter has been added.

The production method of Claim 4 includes the novel feature of intermittently supplying an electrode active material composition by die head such that: the electrode active material composition is supplied from an ink pan filled with electrode active material composition to the die head via a switching valve by an ink supplying pump; and at the time of non-application the switching valve is switched to return the electrode active material composition to the ink pan. In the present invention, at the time of application, the electrode active material composition can be supplied to the die head 31 as a flow 25A of the electrode active material composition by switching valve 37. At the time of non-application, the switching valve 37 is switched to return the electrode active material composition so that the electrode active material composition is not supplied to the die head 31 (see Fig. 3). The present invention uses the method to return the electrode active material composition to an ink pan by switching the switching valve at the time of non-application so that no complicated control, such as a method of opening/closing an outlet port as in Yoshinaga to be hereinafter described, is required and coating liquid can be efficiently utilized.

In contrast, the apparatus of Yoshinaga is designed to form coated and non-coated sections on a web by opening/closing the outlet port of die head by means of

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an air cylinder. In the apparatus of Yoshinaga, for preventing an increase in inner pressure of a liquid reservoir section associated with the closing of the outlet port, it is required to control the opening/closing movement of the outlet port of the die head and the timing of suspending an ink feed pump by means of control device.

Moreover, the method of opening/closing an outlet port as in Yoshinaga has the problem that at the time of opening/closing the outlet port, pressure fluctuation occurs in the ink inside the die head, and thereby a coating can be variable in thickness. In the method of the present invention, however, supplying the electrode active material composition to the die head and returning the same to the ink pan are switched by the switching valve 37 so that no ink pressure fluctuation is basically caused when the supply of the electrode active material composition is intermitted.

In Yoshinaga, there is no description of the method such that the electrode active material composition is supplied from an ink pan filled with electrode active material composition to the die head via a switching valve by an ink supplying pump; and the switching valve is switched at the time of non-application to return the electrode active material composition to the ink pan, as the method of supplying an electrode active material composition intermittently by a die head according to the present invention.

On page 4, the rejection as provided in Claim 4 remarks that "Yoshinaga teaches that slitting a substrate comprising an active material after the pressing step would form the substrate comprising an active material having a predetermined size." Such a description is not found in Yoshinaga.

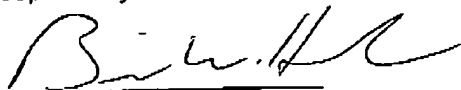
Claims 8 and 12 depend from Claim 4 and are likewise considered novel and non-obvious in view of the cited prior art references.

In light of the foregoing response, all the outstanding objections and rejections are considered overcome. Applicant respectfully submits that this application should now be in condition for allowance and respectfully requests favorable consideration.

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Respectfully submitted,



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